

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 SAJ-01 IO-10 DHA-02 ORM-01

ITFE-05 /093 W

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R 221018Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8163

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

CINCPAC

COMUSMACTHAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 14779

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, CB

SUBJ: THAI HOPES FOR CAMBODIA

REF: A. STATE 169298 B. FBIS BK 150114Y 75

SUMMARY: A COUNTRY WARY OF THE PRESENT SITUATION IN CAMBODIA, THAILAND HOPES ITS NEIGHBOR WILL BECOME "NORMAL", A PROCESS THE THAI BELIEVE SIHANOUK'S RETURN WILL ACCELERATE. THE RTG STRONGLY DESIRES TO RESUME RELATIONS WITH CAMBODIA. END SUMMARY.

1. A COURTESY CALL JULY 15 ON THEP THEWAKUN, CHIEF OF THE SOUTH-EAST ASIA DIVISION, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE THE SUBJECT OF THAI VIEWS ON THE EVOLUTION OF CAMBODIA. AGREEING THAT THERE ARE A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF RUMORS CIRCULATING ABOUT PRINCE SIHANOUK'S IMPENDING RETURN  
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HOME TO BELIEVE THERE MUST BE SOME TRUTH TO THE STORY, THEP SAID

THAILAND COULD ONLY HOPE IT WILL BE SOON, SINCE SIHANOUK'S PRESENCE MIGHT HELP RESTORE SOME NORMALCY TO THE COUNTRY. ALTHOUGH NO ONE KNOWS HOW FAR THE PRINCE WOULD BE ALLOWED TO CIRCULATE, THE OFFICIAL SUGGESTED THE KC REGIME MAY BE IN ENOUGH TROUBLE THAT IT COULD USE HIS PRESENCE TO HELP BUILD UP POPULAR SUPPORT.

2. THEP ADHERES TO THE NOTION THAT THERE IS CURRENTLY A STRUGGLE FOR POWER WITHIN GRUNK. HE IS CONVINCED THAT FORCES FAVORABLE TO THE DRV--USING THE SEVERAL THOUSAND KHMER WHO REPORTEDLY WENT TO HANOI AT THE TIME OF THE 1954 GENEVA ACCORDS AS ITS CORE OF SUPPORT --ARE NOW IN CONTROL IN CAMBODIA. HE THINKS THAT THE PEKING BRANCH OF GRUNK, IN AGREEMENT WITH THE KHIEU SAMPHAN FORCES AND THE PRC, WANTS TO TRY AT LEAST TO BALANCE THE FORCES IN CAMBODIA, AND SIHANOUK'S RETURN TO PHNOM PENH WOULD BE THE TOOL AT ACHIEVE THIS.

3. THAILAND IS QUITE CONCERNED OVER ITS RELATIONS WITH CAMBODIA, THEP NOTED. THE REFUGEE PROBLEM IS BECOMING MORE DIFFICULT, AND THAILAND WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE REFUGEES RETURN HOME TO CAMBODIA, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO ADAPT TO LIFE IN THE U.S. OR EUROPE. MOREOVER, THERE ARE NUMEROUS INCIDENTS OCCURRING ALONG THE BORDER, MANY MORE THAN ONE READS ABOUT IN THE PRESS. THESE INCIDENTS OCCUR OVER SMUGGLING, CATTLE RUSTLING, AND "TROUBLE-MAKERS" WHO GO BACK INTO CAMBODIA TO SETTLE OLD SCORES. BOTH SIDES VIEW THESE INCIDENTS MORE SERIOUSLY THAN THEY WOULD IF THERE WERE ALREADY DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS EXISTING BETWEEN THEM.

4. ASKED WHETHER THERE IS ANY KHMER SEREI ACTIVITY WHICH, SUING THAILAND AS ITS BASE, IS STRIKING BACK INTO CAMBODIA, THEP SAID THE RTG IS NOT AWARE OF SUCH AT THIS TIME. THE RTG, HOWEVER, HAS RECEIVED A REPORT FROM THE GOVERNOR OF CHANTHABURI TO THE EFFECT THAT THE KHMER SEREI ARE GROUPING INSIDE THE CAMBODIAN BORDER, THE THE CARDAMOM MOUNTAINS. ACCORDING TO THAT REPORT, DISSIDENTS ARE PREPARING FOR A LONG STAY IN THAT DIFFICULT MOUNTAIN TERRAIN FROM WHICH THEY WOULD LAUNCH ATTACKS. THEP SAID THAT GENERAL NORODOM CHANTARANGSEY IS ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THOSE DISSIDENTS. ASKED WHO WOULD ARM THEM, THEP SAID HE WAS NOT SURE ANYONE WOULD NEED TO ARM THEM. THEY WOULD PROBABLY BE ABLE TO EXIST WITHOUT OUTSIDE HELP.

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5. COMMENT: THE RTG CONTINUES TO HOPE THAT TALKS WILL TAKE PLACE WITH GRUNK LEADING TO RELATIONS. FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI CHUNHAWAN EXPRESSED THIS VIEW MOST RECENTLY IN A NEWSPAPER INTERVIEW JULY 19. INDEED, HIS MINISTRY HAS HAD ONE OF ITS OFFICERS EXPERIENCED IN CAMBODIAN QUESTIONS STANDING BY IN BANGKOK IN ANTICIPATION OF SUCH TALKS BEGINNING.

6. PERHAPS THE THAI DO NOT UNDERSTAND MUCH BETTER THAN THE REST OF US WHAT IS REALLY HAPPENING INSIDE CAMBODIA. FOR EXAMPLE, THE KC SOCIO-ECONOMIC REORGANIZATION APPEARS TO US TO BE MORE SUGGESTIVE OF THE CHINESE RATHER THAN THE VIETNAMESE GUIDING HAND THAT THEP CLAIMS IS NOW IN CONTROL THERE. THE THAI ATTITUDE SEEMS TO BE BEST SUMMED UP BY THE FOLLOWING PORTION OF AN EDITORIAL IN THE NATION ON JULY 15: "FROM THAILAND'S POINT OF VIEW, IT IS NOT IMPORTANT WHO RULES IN PHNOM PENH BUT IT SHOULD HAVE A STABLE GOVERNMENT WITH WHICH WE COULD HAVE FRIENDLY RELATIONS." (REF B) THAILAND REMAINS HOPEFUL THAT CAMBODIA WILL EVOLVE TO THIS POINT IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

7. WE WILL COMMENT SEPARATELY ON THE KHMER SEREI, INCLUDING ALLEGATIONS OF CHANTARANGSEY'S RESISTANCE ACTIVITY.  
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